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**The Weather**  
Today: Mostly sunny, very windy.  
High 40°F (4°C)  
Tonight: Windy and chilly.  
Low 25°F (-4°C)  
Tomorrow: Sunny, breezy.  
High 43°F (6°C)  
Details, Page 2

Volume 128, Number 14

Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Friday, March 21, 2008

## Bexley Withdraws From Dormcon

Residents Say \$1,200 Tax Bought Them Nothing, But Dormcon President Disagrees

By Valery K. Brobbey  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Bexley Hall has decided to stop paying its yearly \$1,200 tax to the Dormitory Council and will not be represented by Dormcon, effectively seceding from the organization.

Independent and sometimes anachistic, Bexley residents have a tradition of not participating in student government or Dormcon. However, Bexley has been taxed by Dormcon since 2001, an incongruity with their principles that residents only noticed this fall. Residents contend that they were never represented by Dormcon and that they received no benefits from their membership. But Dormcon's president says that Bexley has benefited from the organization's advocacy and is part of the community.

The conflict peaked last week, when about 25 Bexley residents went to the March 12 Dormcon meeting and asked the organization to stop taxing Bexley residents. Dormcon has agreed not to tax Bexley in the future, but declined to refund taxes paid in prior years.

"In our eyes Bexley has been part of Dormcon because they are a dorm and we represent all dorms," said Sarah C. Hopp '08, Dormcon's president.

Katherine L. Cheney '09, a Bexley Hall resident, said that Bexley "has never been a part of Dormcon."

**Bexley**, Page 13



ERIC D. SCHMIEDL—THE TECH

Beginning next fall, Bexley Hall will no longer pay taxes to the Dormitory Council.

## Faculty Consider Awarding Double Majors, Not Degrees

Current Students Would Retain Double Degree Option

By Ramya Sankar  
STAFF REPORTER

Future students pursuing separate programs in two courses will receive a single "double major" degree instead of double degrees if a Committee on the Undergraduate Program proposal is passed at the next faculty meeting on Wednesday, April 16.

At the Wednesday, March 19 faculty meeting, the CUP proposed to change the way double degrees work. Under the new proposed policy, students would no longer need to

**Double Major**, Page 15

## Harvard Student Killed in Accident

A Harvard student was killed Monday in Cambridge after being struck by a Shaw's delivery truck. Isaac J. Meyers was hit 6:45 a.m. while in a crosswalk at the corner of Prospect Street and Mass Ave.

Meyers was dragged 160 feet while trapped between the fourth and fifth axles of the truck, according to a police report cited in the *Cambridge Chronicle*. He was pronounced dead at 12:20 p.m.

Similar accidents have occurred on both Memorial Dr. and Mass Ave. on the MIT campus. Michele S. Micheletti '00 was killed on Halloween in 1997 outside New House on Memorial Dr. after she was struck by two oncoming cars. A Boston University freshman, Beatriz Ponce, was killed in October

**Briefs**, Page 14

This is *The Tech*'s last issue before spring break. Regular publication will resume on Tuesday, April 1.

### ARTS

Looking for a Restaurant Week adventure? Try Grotto for high-end Italian on Beacon Hill.

Page 7

### NEWS

High schools mislead the government about their dropout rates because of No Child Left Behind requirements.

Page 11



ERIC D. SCHMIEDL—THE TECH  
Jason Burgess G looks out over Killian Court, where hackers placed a 20-sided die last Tuesday, Mar. 18 in memory of Gary Gygax, the inventor of the Dungeons and Dragons.

### In Short

¶ A Boston court will rule today on whether or not to dismiss the charges against Star A. Simpson '10. Simpson faces charges of possessing a hoax device for appearing at Logan Airport wearing a circuit board mistaken for a bomb in September 2007.

¶ Petitions are due today at 5 p.m. for prospective Undergraduate Association and class council candidates.

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World & Nation	2
Opinion	4
It's Friday	5
Arts	6
Comics / Fun Pages	8
Sports	16



# U.S. Defends Use of Intrusive Tactics in Spitzer Investigation

By David Johnston  
and Philip Shenon  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON

The Justice Department used some of its most intrusive tactics against Eliot Spitzer, examining his financial records, eavesdropping on his phone calls and tailing him during its criminal investigation of the Emperor's Club prostitution ring.

The scale and intensity of the investigation of Spitzer, then the governor of New York, seemed on its face to be a departure for the Justice Department, which aggressively investigates allegations of wrongdoing by public officials, but almost never investigates people who pay prostitutes for sex.

A review of recent federal cases shows that federal prosecutors go sparingly after owners and operators of prostitution enterprises, and usually only when millions of dollars are involved or there are aggravating circumstances, like human trafficking or child exploitation.

Government lawyers and investigators defend the expenditure of resources on Spitzer in the Emperor's

Club VIP case as justifiable and necessary since it involved the possibility of criminal wrongdoing by New York's highest elected official, who had been the state's top prosecutor.

Bradley D. Simon, a veteran Justice Department trial lawyer who was a federal prosecutor in Brooklyn throughout the 1990s, said that although it was rare for the department to use so many resources on the workings of a prostitution ring, the involvement of such a high-level politician must change the equation.

"If they've got some evidence of a high-ranking public official involved in violations of federal criminal code, it may not be unreasonable for them to pursue it," he said. Still, he said, "I don't think prostitution has been a high priority at the Justice Department."

The focus on Spitzer was so intense that the FBI used surveillance teams to follow both him and the prostitute in Washington in February. The surveillance teams had followed him at least once before — when he visited the city in January but did not engage a prostitute, officials said, confirming a report in

The Washington Post. Stakeouts and surveillance are labor-intensive and often involve teams of a dozen or more agents and nonagent specialists.

An affidavit filed in the prostitution case did not identify Spitzer by name, only as Client 9, but it provided far more detail, some of it unusually explicit, about Client 9's encounter with the prostitute than about any of the nine other clients identified by number in the document.

Government officials, including several who have been briefed on details of the case but declined to speak on the record because they were not authorized to discuss a continuing inquiry, said there was no alternative but to look into Spitzer's activities once investigators began examining reports of suspicious transactions that banks filed with the Treasury Department. Those reports suggested to investigators that Spitzer might have been trying to keep anyone from noticing transfers of his own funds. That is the kind of activity that can bring an investigation of the possibility of corruption.

## Facing Declining Markets, Lender Resorts to Emergency Financing

By Eric Dash  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Even as financial shares led a stock market rally on Thursday, the crisis in the credit markets threatened to engulf one of the nation's largest commercial finance companies.

The CIT Group, a century-old company that lends money to small businesses and midsize corporations, was forced to draw on \$7.3 billion of emergency bank credit lines. Its shares and bonds plummeted.

CIT, whose businesses range from making student loans to financing purchases of airplanes and railroad cars, announced that it would try to sell some assets or businesses to raise cash and repay its debts. Analysts said the tightening credit squeeze could drive the entire company into the arms of a suitor.

The developments at CIT suggest that the credit troubles that felled Bear Stearns this week continue to spread, despite efforts by the Federal Reserve to encourage banks to lend to other financial companies.

For the first time since the Depression, the Fed has extended credit directly to securities firms in an effort to stabilize the capital markets. The cen-

tral bank also expanded the types of collateral that firms can use in buying Treasury securities at a government auction next week. The moves helped shore up confidence in the financial system and set off a rally in shares of banks and brokerage firms.

But unlike banks and now Wall Street firms, commercial lenders like CIT cannot borrow from the Fed. And also unlike banks, which use customer deposits to finance the loans they make, lenders like CIT depend almost solely on the capital markets to raise money.

Shares of CIT plunged almost 45 percent in heavy trading on Thursday morning before rebounding during the afternoon amid the broad rally in financial shares. CIT closed down \$2.01, or 17.3 percent, at \$9.63.

"Tapping bank lines of credit for financials is viewed as very much a rainy day" solution, said Richard Hofmann, an analyst for CreditSights, an independent research firm based in New York. "It's another blow to confidence in the company. They are in a significantly challenging state."

In announcing its moves on Thursday, CIT said a "protracted disruption" in the credit markets and ratings

downgrades meant that it could no longer secure short-term debt financing to pay loans. As a result, CIT said it would draw upon backup financing and might have to sell certain businesses. Analysts, however, said CIT executives might be forced to sell the entire company.

CIT prospered when credit was easy. But its fortunes began to plunge last summer as the credit crisis that began in the market for subprime home mortgages started to spread. The company posted a loss of \$132.2 million last quarter, in part because of bad investments linked to subprime home loans. Meanwhile, the credit market crisis has made it difficult for CIT to issue bonds and commercial paper, or short-term IOUs.

Struggling to raise money in the markets, CIT drew upon that entire emergency credit line on Thursday after its troubles intensified. This week, Moody's Investors Service and Standard & Poor's reduced CIT's credit rating, making it even more difficult for CIT to raise money by selling short-term notes to big money market funds, which are typically barred from buying securities that lack high ratings.

## Oil, Gold Prices Drop Sharply In Volatile Commodities Market

By Michael M. Grynbaum  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Oil, gold and other major commodities fell sharply on Thursday, capping their steepest weekly drop in a half-century, as investors fled what many had believed to be the last safe haven in turbulent markets.

Oil tumbled 6.9 percent in two days of trading, and most other commodities fell by 7 percent or more in that period — including a precipitous 15 percent drop for wheat.

This week's declines brought an abrupt end to months of big price increases that had attracted speculative cash. "It was the last thing that bankers could hang their hats on," said Fadel Gheit, an analyst at Oppenheimer & Co. "Everything else had melted before their eyes."

For the four-day week ending Thursday, an index created by the Commodity Research Bureau in Chicago fell 8.3 percent, the sharpest one-week decline since the index began in 1956. (Markets are closed for Good Friday.)

Seeking to make sense of the sharp declines, some analysts on

Thursday saw a bubble bursting.

"Commodities prices got way out of hand because people felt that when you couldn't buy stocks because of the soft dollar and the economy, the place to be was in these hard commodities," said Michael Rose, a trader at Angus Jackson in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. "Every speculator in the world bought gold and crude oil and the grains and coffee and sugar and cocoa. Prices became insane."

If the declines continue, they could be good news for consumers. Lower prices for commodities like oil and wheat can translate into lower inflation for many products, including gasoline and groceries. Such a development would ease the job of the Federal Reserve, which is battling lower economic growth with steps that risk adding to inflation.

Indeed, one such step earlier in the week may have sparked the commodity sell-off.

Almost all commodities are priced in dollars on global markets. When the dollar falls, commodity prices tend to rise, and vice versa.

On Tuesday, the Federal Reserve

cut interest rates by three-quarters of a percentage point. That was less than markets had expected, sending the dollar higher. Within hours, commodity prices — which had been volatile for weeks — began to drop. Investors who had seen commodities as a hedge against the dollar scrambled to get out of their bets.

"The precious metals markets and all commodity markets had built in a higher cut," said James Steel, a commodities analyst at HSBC.

Gold, which had recently crossed the \$1,000-an-ounce mark after a huge run-up, settled Thursday at \$920 in New York trading. Oil intermittently straddled the \$100 mark before settling down 2.5 percent, at \$101.84 a barrel. That is still an unusually high price, but it is down 7.6 percent since the beginning of the week.

"These are all significant declines," Steel said.

Some analysts saw them as more than just a reaction to a higher dollar. In their view, investors are growing increasingly worried that a recession will cause a worldwide drop-off in demand for raw materials.

## Global Conflicts Overstretch U.N.

By Warren Hoge

THE NEW YORK TIMES

UNITED NATIONS

Kofi Annan, the former secretary general, said Thursday that the United Nations was "overstretched" in conflict areas and should resist taking on new responsibilities as long as major powers proved unwilling to supply needed support.

"I don't think the U.N. is in a position today to go in and take over in Afghanistan; I don't think the U.N. will get the resources to play a major and active role in Somalia," he said. "We are already struggling to get the resources in Darfur, where some have declared it a genocide."

The United Nations, he said, must make clear what it can and cannot do. "To create the impression of action when nothing is happening is, I think, more damaging," he said, in a conversation with journalists who cover the United Nations.

## At Harvard, Students' Muslim Traditions Are Topic Of Debate

By Neil Macfarquhar

THE NEW YORK TIMES

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

A small controversy over how Harvard practices tolerance has been sparked by two issues relating to Muslim belief — whether the call to prayer should ring out across Harvard Yard and whether women should be granted separate gym hours.

Heated discussions have erupted on dormitory chat rooms, students said, while various opinion articles in the student newspaper, The Harvard Crimson, have denounced both practices.

"I think that because Harvard is a secular campus, there is a fear among some students that religious beliefs or practices might be imposed on people who don't want anything to do with them," said Jessa Birdsall, a sophomore who said she thought the university should accommodate the beliefs of all students.

The debate began in early February, when the undergraduate college restricted one of the three largest gyms on its main campus, the Quadrangle Recreational Athletic Center, to women only on Mondays from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., and Tuesdays and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

The college spokesman, Robert Mitchell, would not describe how the decision was reached, but various students said a small group of Muslim women undergraduates living in the Leverett House dormitory asked for the change.

The group of women felt that workout clothes violated the Muslim prescription that both sexes wear appropriate dress in shared environments. So they asked the dormitory to set aside its mini gyms for women a few hours each week. The request eventually made its way to the Harvard College Women's Center and it was decided that the Quadrangle center, which Mitchell called the college's least-used athletic facility, would be restricted to women only at certain times. He said the change was an experiment that would be evaluated in June.

The second controversy occurred after the adhan, or call to prayer, was once again broadcast across Harvard Yard at noon from the steps of the Widener Library for several days in late February. The broadcast was part of Islam Awareness Week, sponsored by the Muslim student club, the Harvard Islamic Society.

## United Airlines Grounds 7 Planes

By Matthew L. Wald

THE NEW YORK TIMES

United Airlines grounded seven Boeing 747s on Thursday when it was told by the Federal Aviation Administration that a maintenance contractor, Korean Air Lines, had checked the planes' altimeters using an instrument that was not properly calibrated.

A spokeswoman said Thursday that disruption to flight schedules was "minimal" but she added that some of the planes had not yet been cleared to return to flight.

"All our international flights left on time today," said the spokeswoman, Megan McCarthy.

United made the announcement two days after the FAA told its inspectors to reconfirm that the airlines were in compliance with all requirements.

This month, the FAA proposed a fine of \$10.2 million against Southwest Airlines because it flew dozens of older Boeing 737s without the inspections required by FAA orders called airworthiness directives. According to the FAA, Southwest also misled the agency about the planes.

But United said in a statement that the problem with its 747s was not related to airworthiness directives. It also said that the retesting, conducted Tuesday, "found no issues."

United said it had "voluntarily disclosed" the problem to the FAA, a step airlines can use to gain immunity from penalties. But the FAA was unable to confirm that Thursday evening.

## Immigration Agent Demanded Sex, Officials Say

By Nina Bernstein

THE NEW YORK TIMES

No problems so far, the immigration agent told the American citizen and his 22-year-old Colombian wife at her green card interview in December. After he stapled one of their wedding photos to her application for legal permanent residency, he had just one more question: What was her cell phone number?

The calls from the agent started three days later. He hinted, she said, at his power to derail her life and deport her relatives, alluding to a brush she had with the law before her marriage. He summoned her to a private meeting. And at noon on Dec. 21, in a parked car on Queens Boulevard, he named his price — not realizing that she was recording everything on the cell phone in her purse.

"I want sex," he said on the recording. "One or two times. That's all. You get your green card. You won't have to see me anymore."

She reluctantly agreed to a future meeting. But when she tried to leave his car, he demanded oral sex "now," to "know that you're serious." And despite her protests, she said, he got his way.

The 16-minute recording, which the woman first took to The New York Times and then to the Queens district attorney, testifies to the vast power of low-level immigration law enforcers, and to the growing desperation of immigrants seeking legal status.

# OPINION

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### Right to Protest

The pro-independence protests that Tibetans around the world kicked off this past week should be allowed to continue in a peaceful manner. Timed to coincide with the 49th anniversary of the Dalai Lama's escape from Lhasa, Tibet to Dharmasala, India, these protests stand for an impressively sustained defiance against the Chinese political machine. It is most disappointing that neighboring India has decided to detain protesters for no apparent reason. It demonstrates India's willingness to bow to China's political wishes for the sake of maintaining relations. While this may be the correct diplomatic move, no individual who cares for the well-being of other human beings should be able to genuinely accept it. It is a heinous crime. The monks have the right to non-violent protest and let them exercise it, be it in Lhasa, New Delhi, Kathmandu, or Washington, D.C. If human rights are sacrificed so easily now, what will happen in the future when the economic clout of certain countries grows? As the Olympics approach, let us all remember we are human beings and not let others be treated so trivially in the name of superficial purpose.

Krishna K. Gupta '09

### '21' Casting Discrimination is Inappropriate

After reading the March 14 *Tech* interview about the upcoming '21' movie (due out March 28), I came across some eyebrow-raising news about the film's casting process on various blogs. For those unfamiliar with the film or interview, the movie is based off the

best-selling book *Bringing Down the House*, about the real-life team of mostly Asian American males who won big in Las Vegas. The two main characters in the book, 'Kevin in Lewis' and 'Steve Fisher', were Jeffrey Ma '94 and Michael Aponte '95, two Asian American males.

The Hollywood version stars Jim Sturgess, and according to the book author Ben Mezrich in a *Tech* interview dated Sept. 30, 2005, the Hollywood casting directors initially wanted to completely exclude any Asian male characters from the film:

"Mezrich mentioned the stereotypical Hollywood casting process — though most of the actual blackjack team was composed of Asian males, a studio executive involved in the casting process said that most of the film's actors would be White, with perhaps an Asian female. Even as Asian actors are entering more mainstream films, such as "Better Luck Tomorrow" and the upcoming "Memoirs of a Geisha," these stereotypes still exist, Mezrich said."

I think this is pretty outrageous, and is just as questionable as when Brian Dennehy played Kublai Khan in HBO's recent "Marco Polo" movie.

While there have not been too many complaints in mainstream media over these developments, one cannot help but wonder what the backlash would have been like if, for example, Hollywood had made the movie "Coach Carter," with a Caucasian actor replacing Sam Jackson's role, which was also based on a real-life story. In terms of marketing or box office numbers, it is also puzzling why they would cast Sturgess (a relative unknown) as the lead student instead of Aaron Yoo (also in the film as a minor role), when the movie already had cast such big-name stars as Kevin Spacey and Laurence Fishburne.

Alvin Lin '04

### MITCO Shouldn't Spoon-Feed

My experience with MITCO was quite different than what Sarah Levin described in Tuesday's Rants and Raves. When I decided last minute to apply to medical school, I too walked into the Careers Office clueless about my future and the application process. I too was given statistics and a checklist of questions. But instead of taking so personally their objective criticisms, I took advantage of MITCO's resources to strengthen my chances. MITCO was accommodating in scheduling mock interviews, giving feedback on my essays, and answering my many questions. I left the Careers Office that day with a stack of handouts, brochures, and a clearer sense of what further steps I needed to take. I understand, though, how my experience would be disappointing if I believed MITCO's responsibilities to be sugarcoating and mollycoddling.

What I love about MIT is that we're not spoon-fed all the answers; we learn how to figure things out ourselves. We're not told, "Follow steps 1, 2, and 3, and you will succeed," like we may have been in high school. I am most disappointed when students feel entitled to that success while making excuses such as "MIT does not have grade inflation" or "it is harder than most other schools" to not work harder, become better, and exercise more assertion in pursuing what they want. At MIT, we're not told that we're not good enough, as Ms. Levin claims. Instead, we're told what more we're capable of doing and how much further we can push our limits. We can either be defeated and feel sorry for ourselves, or we can listen carefully and take personal initiative to benefit from all the resources MIT has to offer so that we can fulfill our dreams.

Erqi Liu '08

**"We're still going to get our bonuses, severance packages, stock options, and use of the company plane, right?"**

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# IT'S FRIDAY

Brought to you by CAMPUS LIFE

The Tech, March 21, 2008, Page 5

## Couture 101

By Manisha Padi and Ying Yang

When most people think of fashion, they don't picture this column or the average trip to the mall. Instead, they think of the glamorous world of couture, replete with catwalks and coat hanger-thin models, wearing outrageously impractical creations and strutting among crowds of high-brow socialites. Though this world exists, it has not been the focus of this column, as it is a world none of us will likely ever inhabit. What goes on there, however, does have a direct impact on the clothes we wear. So we decided to take a peek into that world to see why people care at all about design-

ers, fashion shows, and the trends they bring.

So, why do we care about trends? They certainly don't have to be followed — some of them are downright ugly! Since we no longer live in a world where we make our own clothes, however, there are two benefits to staying current with trends. First, the trends dictate what will be available at the stores most of us shop at; top designers heavily influence the clothing types carried at affordable stores. Second, experienced designers and stylists give the average person great ideas on how to put together flattering and artistic looks by experimenting with cut and fabric. This is particularly important for all of us here at MIT, since we certainly don't have the time to do too much original experimentation.

We are, of course, not encouraging anyone to become slaves to the trends. Since it is true, however, that most of us shop in places that are influenced by trends (even thrift stores follow trends, just of decades past), trends provide a structure for ordinary non-designers to express their creativity. Therefore, given the silhouette and cuts that are popular during a particular season, consumers can shop for the fits, colors, and combinations that are most flattering to them. We encourage everyone not to turn away from designers, but instead embrace the creative guidelines they bring to our outfits.

Therefore, as a short orientation, here are some influential design houses and what they think you might be wearing in the next couple months and how you might make use of the information.

Burberry, a British luxury house founded in 1856, manufactures outdoor attire as well as everyday wear and accessories. You can probably spot the unmistakable checked pattern (aka Haymarket check) from a mile away. Burberry's Spring 2008 collection focuses on short, highly worked

chiffon and organdy dresses under puffy jackets and lightweight coats that run from rocker style to very rich.

Yves Saint Laurent was founded in 1962 and initially developed the beatnik look, safari jackets, tight pants, and thigh high boots. They also created the tuxedo suit for women. In a season where most of the fashion revolves around flowers and ruffles, YSL's Spring 2008 collection is all about minimalistic elegance and a tailored look, with strongly cut, modern jackets.

Missoni, an Italian company based in Milan was founded in 1964 with what started as a small family owned store. Missoni is famous for their unique knits, colorful patterns and stripes on many types of fabrics (wool, cotton, linen, rayon and silk, etc.) and forty colors. Missoni's Spring 2008 collection consists of the same noticeable knits and prints with all sorts of designs (short, long, zigzags, flowy, flowery, and boho styles).

Overall, the trend on the runways seemed to be a contrast of feminine, floaty dresses and masculine, tailored pants and jackets for the ladies. Guys, the runways are not so clear, but there is definitely a turn towards slim fit pants with lower, baggier crotches, and bright accessories and accents.

Now, what can you do with this information, you ask? Well, those of us looking for a spring jacket could pick up a tailored, suit-type piece, while the ladies looking for spring dresses could experiment with modern floral prints. And, we could all keep in mind the popular silhouettes when picking out spring accessories.

So, next time you hear something about a designer or have a chance to look through a magazine, don't completely tune it out — it might give you something to think about. And remember the best thing about trends — you don't have to adopt all of them. Take what you like and forget about the rest, and certainly don't be afraid to look outside the usual ready to wear collections in the mall. Just create the mix that you're most happy and comfortable with.

## Figuring Out Fashion

## Ask A TA

Dear AskATA,

I don't get entropy. How is it that entropy in information theory seems completely different than entropy in thermodynamics? What's up with this?

Thanks,  
Shana

Dear Shana,

Entropy is a lot like me, Random. So the best way to understand entropy is to do random things. How about instead of the stroll to class through the infinite, try walking outside singing at the top of your lungs to the new Britney CD or giving out some high fives to your professors after lecture. That'll keep them guessing. Try your own random thing like in the middle of class, get up and yell, "Why is he/she saying this, What is going on?" and then just walk out. Now you will produce the entropy that you wish to understand. If anyone looks at you weird, just tell them, "Hey I created entropy today, what did YOU do?"

—TA Ramya Sankar G

Dear Shana,

I have office hours Tues. 5-7 pm. 2-342. Come by if you want to know the real answer.

—TA Dave Shirokoff G

*Ask a TA: Real TAs tackling life problems they're unqualified to handle. Got a question? E-mail Askata@tech.mit.edu. Serious inquiries need not inquire.*



YING YANG

Agata Wisniewska '11 is wearing a cardigan from Victoria's Secret (\$25) while everything else: necklace (\$10), tank top (\$5), skirt (\$30), tights (\$5), and shoes (\$30) was bought in Poland. Why we like her look: Wisniewska's outfit is well coordinated and perfect for spring, brightening up any cloudy/rainy day.

## WMBR Top 5 "Balkans are Sexy" Songs

1. "Passport" by Gogol Bordello, Voi-La Intruder
2. "Mount Wroclai (Idle Days)" by Beirut, Gulag Orkestar
3. "Kalanjnikov" by Goran Bregovic, Underground (Soundtrack)
4. "Bulgarian Chicks" by Balkan Beat Box, Balkan Beat Box
5. "Pehlivanis" by Thanasis Papakonstantinou, Vraxnos Profitis

**Show:** The Magik Bus

**DJ:** Kostas

**Show Style:** A musical journey from East to West and from North to South. A Mix and Match.

**Time Slot:** Tuesday Nights (Wednesday Mornings) 2-3 a.m.

We have plenty of great world music for you to hear on WMBR 88.1 FM. Fans of "Balkans are sexy" might consider tuning in 6-7 p.m. on Monday for Turkish Takeover. Sundays you can hear Compas, Caribbean, and African music, and we have a Western Hemisphere talk show on 6-7 p.m. Fridays. Asian music abounds from 12-1 a.m. Sunday night on Japanamation. And Jesse "Flying 'Bows" Kaminsky brings down the house Wednesdays from 6-8 on the Intercontinental, which features not-English underground music from all over the globe. You can see our full schedule and listen to a live stream at [wmbr.org](http://wmbr.org) PLUS listen to archived feeds from the last two weeks!

## Overheard at MIT

"My mom was right, caffeine is an anti-depressant!"

—Unknown

"What's wrong with you?! How the f\*\*k have you never heard of the Biot Number!?!"  
—Outside the Pappalardo Labs, one guy (loudly) to another

Person 1: "That stuff is more polar than a bear."  
Person 2: "You realize that if I weren't holding a vial full of toxic solvent right now, I would punch you, right?"  
Person 1: "Yep."  
—Overheard standing in line for the nitrogen atmosphere pump in 5.310

wmbr  
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## ARTS

## INTERVIEW

# How to Lose a Movie Set in Vegas

## Jim Sturgess Talks About Filming '21'

**By Jillian A. Berry**

SENIOR EDITOR

A few weeks ago, I sat down with the charming Jim Sturgess, the up and coming 26 year old British actor best known for his role as Jude in the Beatles musical, "Across the Universe." In the upcoming film "21," (based on the book *Bringing Down the House* by Ben Mezrich) Mr. Sturgess plays Ben Campbell, an MIT student who uses his math acumen to win millions playing blackjack in Vegas. During our conversation, Mr. Sturgess talked about what it was like playing a character who is based on a real life MIT alum, Jeffrey Ma '94, filming in Las Vegas, and working with Kevin Spacey. Below is an excerpt:

*The Tech:* Are you happy with the final results of the film?

*Jim Sturgess:* Yeah, definitely. I saw it a while ago. When you're making the film you have no concept of how kind of visual it's going to look. Especially in the scenes when we're playing cards and all that kind of stuff. While we were shooting those scenes it was fairly kind of tedious kind of work; pushing chips and flipping cards and all that kind of stuff. And then when you see the film you see how dramatic it looks. It was a shock to all of us, I think. The director [Robert Luketic] kept saying just trust me, trust me, it's going to look great ... stuff that you kind of don't like doing as much. Actually you want to do the kind of big shouting scenes or all the meaty scenes or whatever. But we kind of stuck with it and I think it paid off.

*TT:* Did you actually understand the math concepts in it?

*JS:* Not at all. No. Couldn't get my head round it at all. I mean we tried. On the weekends I had to play basic strategy blackjack, which is pretty much all you can do unless ... you're a mathematical genius, which is why I think it's so specific to these people's story. It's just not something everyday people can do.

*TT:* What drew you to the movie?



PETER IOVINO—COURTESY OF COLUMBIA PICTURES

**Jim Sturgess stars as MIT Blackjack team member Ben Campbell in the upcoming movie "21." The film opens next Friday, March 28.**

*JS:* The story, I think. I was kind of approached. I was shooting another film called "The Other Boleyn Girl" at the time, and I just got a call saying that Robert Luketic, the director, wanted to meet me about this film that he's making ... I guess the idea of these kind of everyday people just going against the system like

that and coming out on top, which is always a nice take on life. It was just a feel good movie that was exciting to read as a script and I think exciting to watch as a film. And I got to go to Vegas. And I got to wear designer suits which I had never worn before.

*TT:* Were you worried about doing an American accent since you're British?

*JS:* Yeah, definitely, it's always a challenge. I enjoy a challenge that I've never done before. Anyone from England always thinks they can do an alright American accent. And you quickly learn once you're put in a room with a dialect coach that you can't ... I think I maybe 2 weeks to learn how to do it before we started shooting, so it was pretty rushed. I was nervous about it.

*TT:* Did you play cards at all before?

*JS:* No, not at all. Coming from England, it's not really — I mean we play poker for maybe matchsticks or spare change, or something like that ... We don't have a casino kind of culture as much as you guys do over here. And we certainly don't have an equivalent to Las Vegas. So that was part of the appeal really, to sort of learn this whole new world that I didn't know anything about.

*TT:* What was it like filming in Vegas with all the craziness still going on around you?

*JS:* It was insane. It was the only time ever a film set seemed inconspicuous. I remember I went to the toilet in the casino and I remember I came back and I couldn't find the film set. It's like, it's in here somewhere. That's how crazy it is ... We were kind of sectioned off in areas of the casino. We couldn't shut down the whole place.

So of course the everyday life and the machines and all that were all going on whilst we were kind of playing, which helped the atmosphere of the film, I think. Somebody would be doing a scene when somebody would be like, "Wheel of Fortune," and we'd have to cut and wait

for that to finish.

*TT:* Did you get a chance to speak with some of the original MIT team members before or during shooting?

*JS:* They were a big part of the whole process. They were on set a lot, we hung out a lot, we went out on the weekends, we gambled with them a lot.

*TT:* Did they win and you lose?

*JS:* Pretty much. They would kind of shout out, Jim — they were just playing around — what's the count (*shakes head and mouths 'no idea'*) ... So it was fun. And I think for them, they were just loving the fact that we were making this film about them.

*TT:* This film is very different from "Across the Universe," obviously, because you don't sing. Do you prefer being a singer over an actor or vice versa?

*JS:* I don't have a preference, really. I've always done both. I've been sort of writing music, and playing music, and being in bands and stuff like that since I was about 15. And kind of acting — it's always just kind of been both. I've never had to separate the two. I've never felt I had to separate the two. I still kind of feel like that. "Across the Universe" was a kind of dream job really because it was both molded into one, which then became a whole different difficult and complex thing; having to sing your kind of dialogue. Singing a song is one thing, singing what you're supposed to be thinking or saying is another. And then trying not to laugh is another. I was pleased I didn't have to sing in "21".

*TT:* Did you see any similarities between your character in the movie and yourself?

*JS:* Yes, certainly. I think the fact that he needs a sort of push or kick start to think outside the box and not live in a kind of safe environment, which is just so easy for all of us to do. And I think I could see a lot of myself in that. I think acting really is one — the only reason that stops me from being like that. You're often kind of thrown into these difficult situations which make you have to think and behave different ... Other than that, he's a very intellectual human being, which I am not. [The former] would probably be the main similarity that we share and I think most people share.

*TT:* Now that you've done "Across the Universe," "The Other Boleyn Girl," and "21," do you find that you're getting recognized more?

*JS:* Not really, no. No, I wish it would (*laughs*), but no. No, I'm joking. "Across the Universe" was really the only film that's come out. Which was mainly more so here in America and I've been in Belfast shooting another film the whole time it's been out.

*TT:* What film was that that you were shooting?

*JS:* It's a film called "50 Dead Men Walking." It's about the troubles in Northern Ireland in the 1980's, kind of the Catholics and the Protestants and all that stuff.

*TT:* Not the feel good movie.

*JS:* No. And no singing in it either. So I've really been kind of living in that little bubble since the film's come out so I haven't kind of stepped out into the real world I guess.

*TT:* What was it like working with Kevin Spacey?

*JS:* It was cool. He's an amazing actor, a great guy, fun guy, and a very intense guy ... I've seen so many of his films and he's someone I certainly have been so aware of ... I remember he phoned me when I first got the part and I was back in London, and I just got a phone call and it was an anonymous number and I answered it, and said 'hello.' And he said, (*in an intense American accent*) 'Hello, this is Kevin Spacey.' But then we went out and we had lunch back in London because he lives in London. I went to see his play that he was doing at the Old Vic ... [and] then we just hung out then and it was cool. He just felt like a kind of friend.

*TT:* Did you have a lot of free time when you were filming, especially in Vegas?

*JS:* On the weekends we did. A lot of times we shot 6 day weeks and we only got one day off. I remember we did a scene where on the weekend we'd all been out and partied and did all this crazy stuff that you do in Vegas, and then we woke up and pretty much the next of filming was acting what we had just done the night before. The line between reality and work was slowly blurring. Vegas it's easy to kind of get into trouble over there. Not trouble, but fun, which we definitely did.

*\*\*The official movie review for "21" will be in the April 4 issue of The Tech.*

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## MOVIE REVIEW

# Paranoia, Innocence, and Skateboarding

## 'Paranoid Park' Depicts Teenage Realities with Elegance and Ease

**By Balaji Mani**

STAFF WRITER

*Paranoid Park*  
Written and Directed by Gus Van Sant  
Starring Gabe Nevins and Taylor Momsen  
Rated R  
Now Playing in Limited Release

Few films (that I've seen, at least) achieve what Gus Van Sant's latest work, "Paranoid Park," accomplishes with such elegance and ease. If the disjointed, hand-wound montage of San Francisco traffic in the opening scene isn't enough to foreshadow the lack of order and peace in our hero's young teenage life, then certainly it's the haunting soundtrack. Or, you also have the eerie shift in lighting when Alex (Gabe Nevins), America's John Doe of troubled teens, escapes to the seashore to write an epic letter. Then you consider the fact that the majority of the scenes shift in and out of focus, sometimes barely giving the viewer any clue as to where the scene is actually

taking place. This is where the success of "Paranoid Park" triumphs beyond other films about the difficulty being a teenager: it is as though all the elements (artistic and practical) conspire together to make the viewer *feel* like Alex. We truly *see* and *live* as Alex is seeing and living.

Alex is completely immersed in skateboarding and its culture. Though he's admittedly mediocre, his thoughts are dominated by visions and dreams of skating. Van Sant's clever insertion of home-made skating videos (replete with grainy, fish-eye perspective) throughout the film echoes Alex's periodic distraction. These vignettes, which occur a handful of times between every few scenes, give depth and context to Alex's obsession while locking the viewer into nostalgia for the freedom and excitement of skating.

Normalcy seems to dictate Alex's life: beyond his love for his skateboard he has his friend Jared, a girlfriend (played by the quintessential valley girl Taylor Momsen), and lives with his single mother (a situation which, unfortunately,

seems more normal these days). Drama arises when Alex and Jared decide to visit Paranoid Park, an epicenter for teenage subculture. Alex hops a train with a stranger, blindly following him with no inhibition. The week after their visit, Alex and all the skateboarders at his school become implicated in the case of a murder which took place near the park that weekend.

Not only is Alex already dealing with the pain of his separated parents, but he's now in the middle of dealing with an unfriendly, irksome detective. The scenes replay to the viewer as they would replay in Alex's mind. The only chronology here is that of Alex's apprehension – it's very clear who committed the murder, but this is not a detective film. This is a film about a teen coping with responsibility and self-identity.

Life drives forward and Alex becomes emptier as time passes. Color fades from Alex's eyes as his girlfriend attempts to be intimate. After talking to his friend Macy, the only person at school it seems who will sit down to listen

to Alex, he is convinced that the only way to purge his feeling is to write it down in a letter. The entirety of the narration of this film is Alex's dreadful composition of this letter. Each scene is accompanied by another piece of the story, spoken with almost no affect. Alex fails to inflect words or indicate one end of a thought and the beginning of another. The pathos is haunting, yet strikingly real. Alex is already entangled in a web of lies between his mother and his girlfriend when his father seems to be moving out of the house. In a sedated, business-like conversation, his father parts with just as little affect as Alex's droning voice-overs.

The combination of Alex's loneliness, paranoia, innocence, and longing are so tangible that they help launch this film forward from beginning to end. The aforementioned cinematography effects (thanks to Christopher Doyle) complete this trajectory and solidify an honest picture of what it is like to be in Alex's situation. "Paranoid Park" reminds the viewer that film doesn't need an agenda to re-enact reality.

## RESTAURANT REVIEW

# Lunch Splurge

## Grotto Does Restaurant Week

**By Joanne Shih**

STAFF WRITER

*Grotto*  
37 Bowdoin St  
Boston, MA 02114-4201  
Phone: (617) 227-3434  
Hours:  
Lunch - Monday-Friday 11:30-3pm  
Dinner - Sunday-Saturday 5pm-10pm

I decided to kick off my 2008 Boston Restaurant Week experience with lunch at Grotto with a couple friends. Grotto, one of Beacon Hill's high-end Italian restaurants, looks unassuming enough from the outside; the restaurant is below street level and, like its name implies, is quite cave-like once you get past the heavy purple curtain at the entrance. Inside, the red brick walls are peppered with paintings done by local artists, and chandeliers and a fancy wall mirror juxtaposed against the red-piped ceiling (complete with greasy rag) give the place a funky, almost hip vibe. A glance around the small dining area made it clear that we were the youngest patrons there; perhaps Grotto entertains a younger crowd for dinner. The service, while not extraordinary, was decent, and the atmosphere relaxed, although a bit noisier than what I expected.

Grotto's RW lunch menu is pleasing in that it offers a relatively large number of choices; most places only offer two or three main entrees.

For our first courses, we settled on the grilled calamari, garlic and black truffle soup, and ricotta cavatelle (a pasta dish), none of which disappointed. Tossed in a heavy cream sauce with fresh peas, mushrooms, pancetta, and savory house-prepared sausage, the cavatelle was perfectly cooked. For a lighter first course, the calamari, pleasantly chewy and with a hint of smokiness, proved to be an excellent choice. The black truffle soup had an extremely rich consistency and strong garlic flavor, which was great in small doses but made it difficult to finish

*The black truffle soup had an extremely rich consistency and strong garlic flavor, which was great in small doses but made it difficult to finish*

The main entrees we ordered were less unanimously satisfying. I ordered the signature Grotto's Burger, an 8 oz. Italian blue-cheese-stuffed hamburger with apple wood smoked bacon, tomatoes, "secret sauce", and parmesan-tossed fries, and was a bit disappointed. The bread was more biscuit-like than a traditional hamburger bun and was a poor complement to the hefty hunk of blue-cheese-oozing beef, which

oddly enough had little taste. I kept waiting for the enticingly-named "secret sauce" to kick in, but it remained just that — secret, as I couldn't taste much of anything at all besides meat. On the other hand, the fries, coated with sharp parmesan shavings, tasted great with the ketchup, which was especially sweet and tangy, perhaps in comparison to the rather dull burger. The other entrees we tried were hit-or-miss as well. The crab ravioli, with asparagus and almonds, was nothing too remarkable, with small portions and skins that were borderline rubbery. The true winner of the night was an innovative presentation of crispy pan-roasted chicken, laid on top of creamy Yukon gold potatoes and baby spinach.

Though my pants were feeling uncomfortably snug at this point, there was no way we were going to forego our third course (a problem

line rubbery. The true winner of the night was an innovative presentation of crispy pan-roasted chicken, laid on top of creamy Yukon gold potatoes and baby spinach.

Though my pants were feeling uncomfortably snug at this point, there was no way we were going to forego our third course (a problem

that comes with the prix fixe menus of Restaurant Week). Of the three desserts offered, which include tiramisu and a brownie sundae, my favorite was the creamy vanilla bean panna cotta with raspberry drizzle, though it was missing the crispy lemon cookie touted on the menu.

Verdict: Hit or miss. What I thought would be a typical dish turned out to be surprisingly creative and delicious, and what I thought would be a signature item disappointed. For \$20.08, the Restaurant Week price for lunch, eating at Grotto was still a good deal, even though there were some minor disappointments.

## Grotto Tips:

Know before you go: Make reservations. Dress is surprisingly casual. (So save your money for the meal!)

Good for: a romantic date, gaining back calories burned from walking around Beacon Hill

Bad for: kids, groups larger than six or eight, someone with a burger craving

Coming up: Sonsie, Top of the Hub, Haru



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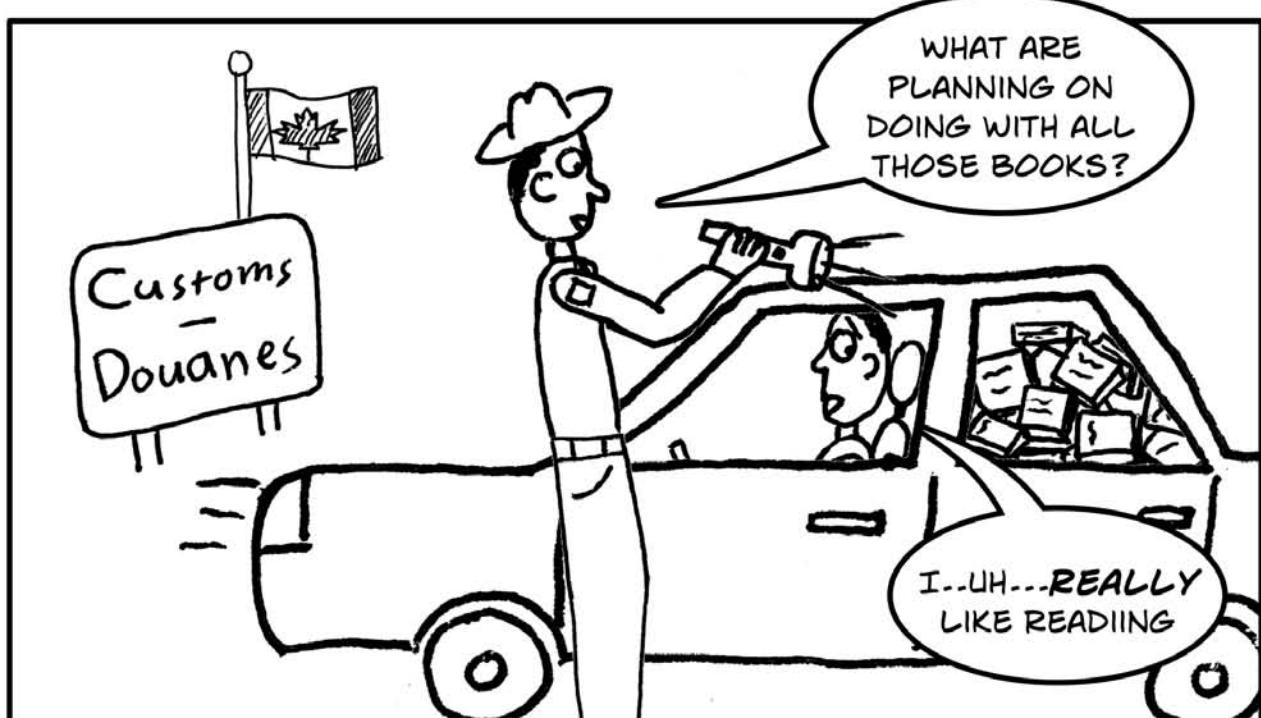
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## Steal My Comic

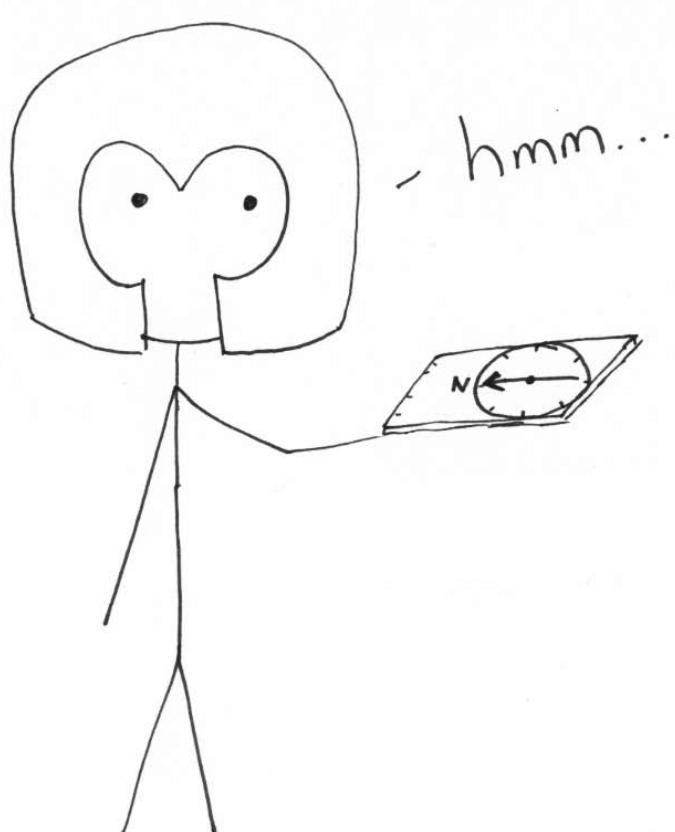
by Michael Ciuffo



## The Daily Blunderbuss

by Ben Peters

Why Magneto never became an Eagle Scout.



## su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9. Solution on page 13.

7	9											
5									1			2
	6						9			3	7	
		9							1			
	2						7		9		5	
			8							3		
	9	4						2		8		
	1							7			6	
										4	3	

Solution, tips, and computer program at <http://www.sudoku.com>Crossword Puzzle  
Solution, page 13

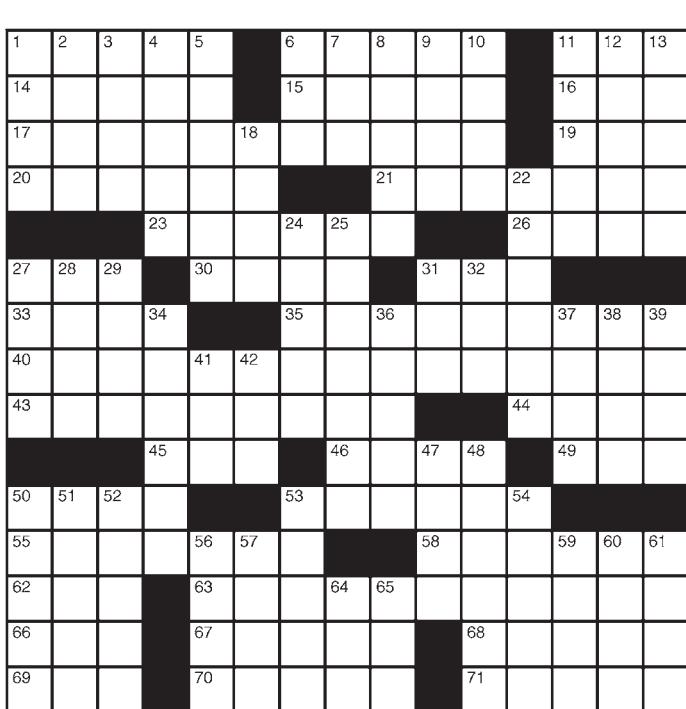
## ACROSS

1 Map collection  
6 Clifton and Karrie  
11 Gotcha!  
14 Oxeye \_\_\_  
15 "The Jetsons" boy  
16 Research rm.  
17 Garments adorning  
duck feathers?  
19 Fridays' lead-in?  
20 Tranquillize  
21 Cut canines  
23 Yiddish man with  
fortitude  
26 Sharpen  
27 D-Day craft  
30 Legendary tale  
31 Mine extraction  
33 Cornelia \_\_\_  
Skinner  
35 Vegetarian rule  
40 Footwear taken  
orally?  
43 Say, "All in

favor..."  
44 Scottish hillside  
45 Play poodle?  
46 Dutch cheese  
49 Lyric poem  
50 Sprinkle after a  
shower  
53 Oil-rich area  
55 Piled up  
haphazardly  
58 Ill  
62 Also  
63 Men's garments,  
made perfectly?  
66 Theol. belief  
67 Shenanigan  
68 Harry Hamlin's  
Lisa  
69 Tin Man's tool  
70 New Age pianist  
71 RBI and ERA  
DOWN  
1 Append

2 Biblical weed  
3 Made stuff up?  
4 Indian state  
5 CBS part  
6 Director Craven  
7 Yore  
8 Stock  
9 Boxer Riddick  
10 "Auld Lang \_\_\_"  
11 Regardless of the  
fact that, for short  
12 Actress Uta  
13 Endure  
18 Start of a  
counting-out rhyme  
22 1951 Broderick  
Crawford film  
24 Secretarial skill, in  
brief  
25 Gab  
27 In a fog  
28 Greek portico  
29 Clock sound  
31 Individual

32 CD\_\_\_  
34 Drawing draft  
36 Bara of silent  
movies  
37 Continental cash  
38 Somewhat  
39 "Of \_\_\_ I Sing"  
41 \_\_\_ Paulo  
42 Leafy climber  
47 Lie next to  
48 Secondary areas of  
study  
50 Crownlet  
51 Tack on  
52 Soup spoon  
53 Of bees  
54 Anticipate  
56 Spot  
57 Mystique  
59 Sicilian volcano  
60 Fasting period  
61 Where kine dine  
64 Station from Tenn.  
65 Travel on snow

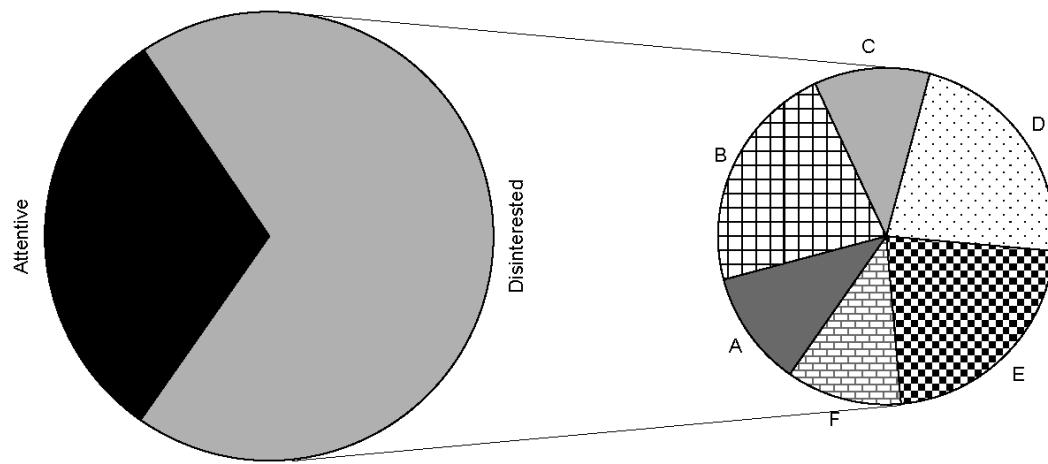


# Doonesbury

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

# Dilbert® by Scott Adams

## Pseudoscience



by Daniel Klein-Marcuschamer

**Figure 29.** The pie charts show the distribution of people attending seminars, according to whether they are paying attention (40%) or not (60%). The chart reflects data from 50 seminars, all of which were followed by a reception. The subcategories shown are the reasons that attendees give for being disinterested, as follows: A. Catching up on sleep; B. Fantasizing about the refreshments that will be served at the reception; C. Not understanding the speaker's accent; D. Got distracted during the slide with the equations; E. Meant to go to restroom beforehand but decided to go get a seat instead; F. Thought the talk was on a different topic. (See Figure 30 for the subcategories of 'Attentive').

## “Words, WORDS, WORDS” Creative Spellings

by Philip Engel

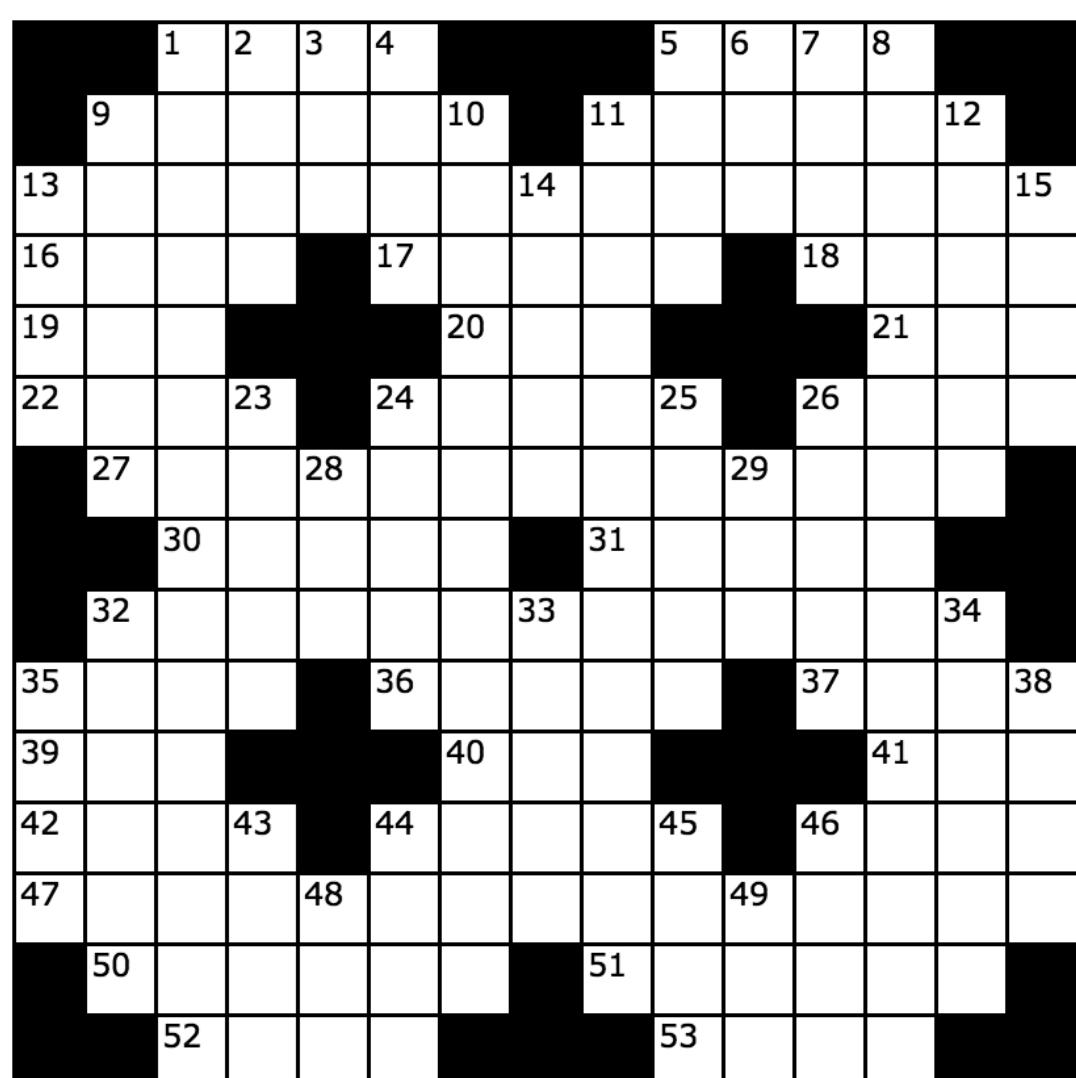
### Sesquipedalia

**ACROSS**

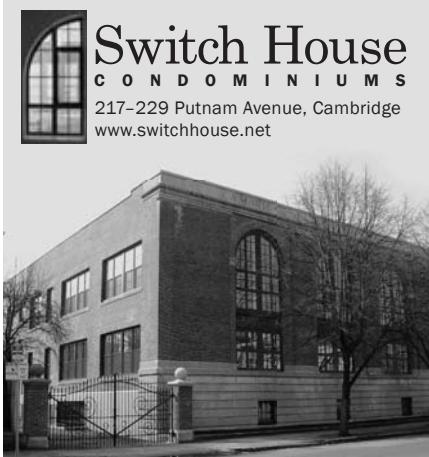
- 1 Fur source
- 5 L'\_\_\_ my \_\_\_
- 9 King's Maine home
- 11 Matriculate
- 13 Polymath
- 16 Potter, to Hagrid
- 17 Less friendly
- 18 "Omg, that's funny."
- 19 My Italian
- 20 And so forth (abbr.)
- 21 Fuss
- 22 Plague swelling
- 24 Rabbit tails
- 26 In a \_\_\_ (irritated)
- 27 Mississippi River urbanite
- 30 Das Musikalischs \_\_\_
- 31 Back from the dead
- 32 Taxing slopes
- 35 Make fast
- 36 Lolcat owl's cry of surprise
- 37 German statesman von Bismarck
- 39 Boot company
- 40 Apple product's codename
- 41 Type of scotch?
- 42 Sevillian six
- 44 Charles de Gaulle object
- 46 Prix fixe or à la carte
- 47 De-wombs (British)
- 50 Dracula's creator
- 51 Effaced
- 52 Droops
- 53 The T

**DOWN**

- 1 Plant and animal studiers?
- 2 Black
- 3 AARP, for one
- 4 7th Secretary-General
- 5 \_\_\_ 'acte
- 6 Bear sound
- 7 Objective
- 8 Hemingway novella
- 9 Type of hospital "milkshake"
- 10 Andretti, for one
- 11 President decider
- 12 Introduction
- 13 Door post
- 14 Started smoking
- 15 Flue deposit
- 16 Equal
- 17 Finds a Snitch
- 18 Unctuous
- 19 Court scribe
- 20 NY Giants, SF 49ers org.
- 21 Before topic
- 22 Woods' enemies
- 23 Real ending
- 24 Killed, Bible-style
- 25 "Go, doggie, go!"
- 26 Bloom County character
- 27 Colonnade
- 28 God of war
- 29 Cultural standard
- 30 Product of atomization
- 31 A flatline, e.g.
- 32 Mercutio's queen
- 33 Dracula's creator
- 34 Effaced
- 35 De-wombs (British)
- 36 The T
- 37 Effaced
- 38 Dracula's creator
- 39 Colonnade
- 40 "Go, doggie, go!"
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- 44 Killed, Bible-style
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- 47 Mercutio's queen
- 48 A flatline, e.g.
- 49 Effaced
- 50 Dracula's creator
- 51 Colonnade
- 52 Mercutio's queen
- 53 The T



Solution, page 11



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# Interim Admissions Director Is Only Top Candidate From MIT

### Admissions, from Page 1

ence on the short list, which others have confirmed.

Schmill declined yesterday to comment on the search process.

Members of the search committee said that the new dean of admissions should be someone who either has knowledge of MIT's culture or who can get up to speed quickly.

The dean of admissions "represents MIT to the public as much as anybody, second perhaps only to the president," said search committee member Professor Patrick H. Winston '65. "It's important for this person to be able to tell the MIT story."

Search committee chair and former President Paul E. Gray '54 said that he personally has "a prejudice toward ... promoting from inside," though the relative brevity of Schmill's admissions record was an important consideration in the selection process. Schmill started working in the admissions office in 2002.

Administrators declined to comment further on the identities or qualifications of the two external candidates, citing concerns that the news of their application would make it back to the candidates' home institutions.

The original charge from Hastings to the search committee requested an unranked, rather than ranked, short list because the general policy

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at MIT is that committees serve only in an advisory capacity.

"I like to make my own decisions," Hastings said.

### New dean will face competition

The new dean of admissions, whoever he or she may be, will need to navigate an environment of heightened competition for the best students. "We're heading into turbulent waters," Hastings said.

MIT already has an impressive admissions profile as judged by the median SAT scores, numbers of underrepresented minorities and valedictorians, and a high yield, or percentage of admitted students who choose to enroll.

But as peer institutions begin to recruit more science and engineering students while also increasing financial aid for the middle and upper-middle classes, competition for the best students will grow, said Hastings. Additionally, the number of students graduating from high schools is expected to peak and then decline in the coming years, so colleges will have fewer students to recruit.

The new dean will therefore have to work to both continue and enhance the quality of the students, said Hastings. He or she should "continue to be very proactive with regard to underrepresented minorities" and with MIT's mission of being an elevator for students of poor economic status.

One additional goal for the new dean will be to increase the number of female applicants, Hastings said. In recent years, male applicants have outnumbered female applicants three to one.



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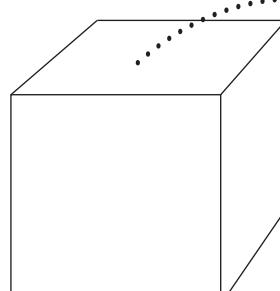
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# High Schools Underrepresent Dropouts to Government

By Sam Dillon  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

JACKSON, MISS.

When it comes to high school graduation rates, Mississippi keeps two sets of books.

One team of statisticians working at the state education headquarters here recently calculated the official graduation rate at a respectable 87 percent, which Mississippi reported to Washington. But in another office piled with computer printouts, a second team of number crunchers came up with a different rate: a more sobering 63 percent.

The state schools superintendent, Hank Bounds, says the lower rate is more accurate and uses it in a campaign to combat a dropout crisis.

"We were losing about 13,000 dropouts a year, but publishing reports that said we had graduation rate percentages in the mid-80s," Mr. Bounds said. "Mathematically, that just doesn't work out."

Like Mississippi, many states use an inflated graduation rate for federal reporting requirements under the No Child Left Behind law and a different one at home. As a result, researchers say, federal figures obscure a dropout epidemic so severe that only about 70 percent of the one million American students who start ninth grade each year graduate four years later.

California, for example, sends to Washington an official graduation rate of 83 percent but reports an estimated 67 percent on a state Web site. Delaware reported 84 percent to the federal government but publicized four lower rates at home.

The multiple rates have many causes. Some states have long obscured their real numbers to avoid embarrassment. Others have only recently developed data-tracking systems that allow them to follow dropouts accurately.

The No Child law is also at fault. The law set ambitious goals, enforced through sanctions, to make every student proficient in math and reading. But it established no national school completion goals.

"I liken N.C.L.B. to a mile race," said Bob Wise, a former West Virginia governor who is president of the Alliance for Excellent Education, a group that seeks to improve schools. "Under N.C.L.B., students are tested rigorously every tenth of a mile. But nobody keeps track as to whether they cross the finish line."

Furthermore, although the law requires schools to make only minimal annual improvements in their rates, reporting lower rates to Washington could nevertheless cause more high schools to be labeled failing — a disincentive for accurate reporting. With Congressional efforts to rewrite the law stalled, Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings has begun using her executive powers to correct the weaknesses in it. Ms. Spellings's efforts started Tuesday with a measure aimed at focusing resources on the nation's worst schools. Graduation rates are also on her agenda.

In an interview, Ms. Spellings said she might require states to calculate their graduation rate according to one federal formula.

"I'm considering settling this once and for all," she said, "by defining a single federal graduation rate and requesting states to report it that way. That would finally put this issue to rest."

In 2001, the year the law was drafted, one of the first of a string of

revisionist studies argued that the nation's schools were losing more students than previously thought.

Jay P. Greene, a researcher at the Manhattan Institute, a conservative research organization, compared eighth-grade enrollments with the number of diplomas bestowed five years later to estimate that the nation's graduation rate was 71 percent. Federal statistics had put the figure 15 points higher.

Still, Congress did not make dropouts a central focus of the law. And when states negotiated their plans to carry it out, the Bush administration allowed them to use dozens of different ways to report graduation rates.

As an example, New Mexico defined its rate as the percentage of enrolled 12th graders who received a diploma. That method grossly undercounts dropouts by ignoring all students who leave before the 12th grade.

The law also allowed states to establish their own goals for improving graduation rates. Many set them low. Nevada, for instance, pledged to get just 50 percent of its students to graduate on time. And since the law required no annual measures of progress, California proposed that even a one-tenth of 1 percent annual improvement in its graduation rate should suffice.

Daniel J. Losen, who has studied dropout reporting for the Civil Rights Project at the University of Califor-

nia, Los Angeles, said he once pointed out to a state official that, at that pace, it would take California 500 years to meet its graduation goal.

"In California, we're patient," Mr. Losen recalled the official saying.

Most troublesome to some experts was the way the No Child law's mandate to bring students to proficiency on tests, coupled with its lack of a requirement that they graduate, created a perverse incentive to push

*"They get them out so they don't have them taking those tests."*

—Wanda Holly-Stirewalt,  
Jackson, Miss.

students to drop out. If low-achieving students leave school early, a school's performance can rise.

No study has documented that the law has produced such an effect nationwide. Experts say they believe many low-scoring students are prodded to leave school, often by school officials urging them to seek an equivalency certificate known as a General Educational Development diploma.

"They get them out so they don't

have them taking those tests," said Wanda Holly-Stirewalt, director of a program in Jackson, Miss., that helps dropouts earn a G.E.D. "We've heard that a lot. It happens all over the system."

After several research groups questioned graduation rates, the federal Department of Education in 2005 published an estimated rate for each state, to identify those that were reporting least accurately. The figures suggested that nine states had overstated their graduation rates by 10 to 22 percentage points.

Part of the discrepancy is because many states inflate their official rate by counting dropouts who later earn a G.E.D. as graduates or by removing them from calculations altogether.

The undercounting of dropouts can be striking.

In Mississippi, the official formula put the graduation rate for the state's largest district, Jackson Public Schools, at 81 percent. Mr. Bounds, the state schools superintendent, said the true rate was 56 percent.

At Murrah High School, one of eight here, the official graduation rate is 99 percent, even though yearbooks show that half of Murrah's freshmen disappear before becoming seniors. Even Murrah's principal, Roy Brookshire, expressed surprise.

"I can't explain how they figured that, truly I can't," Mr. Brookshire said.

Governors also stepped in, wor-

ried that schools were not preparing the work force their states need. In December 2005, all 50 agreed to standardize their graduation rate calculations, basing them on tracking individual students through high school.

Fifteen states have begun to use the formula, said Dane Linn, director of the education division at the National Governors Association. And it has produced some stunning revelations.

In North Carolina, the rate plummeted a year ago to 68 percent from 95 percent. The News & Observer in Raleigh likened the experience to the shock of hearing a doctor diagnose a terrible illness.

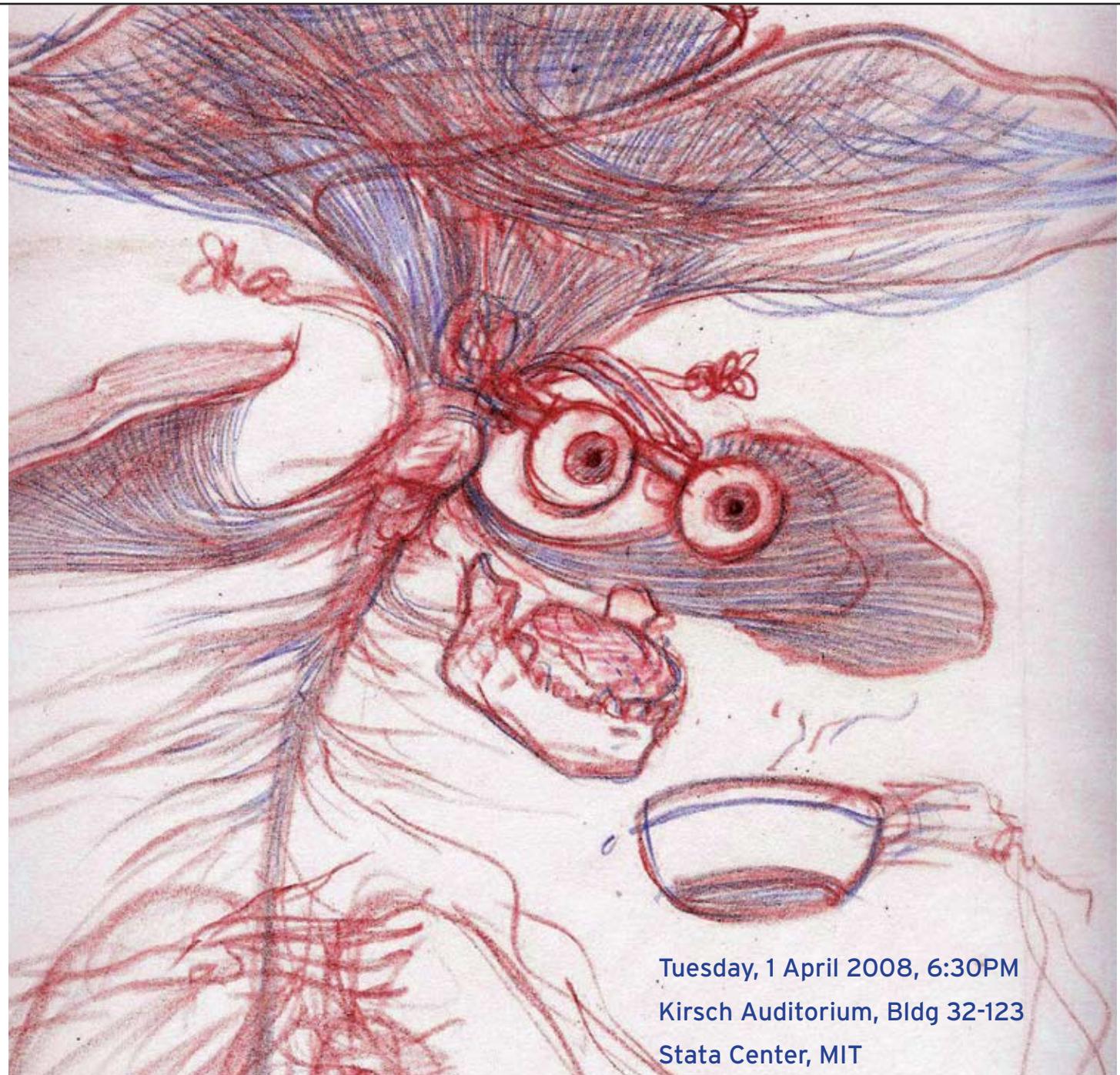
"But now doctors can start treatments that can lead to a cure," the paper said in an editorial.

Mississippi is among the states that have become the most serious about confronting their dropout problem, Mr. Linn said.

The state has been building a record system capable of tracking student data from year to year, and in 2005 used it to estimate a graduation rate of 61 percent, 24 points below the official rate.

Mr. Bounds took office that fall and was initially consumed with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. But he eventually had time to pore over the data.

"It was time to boldly confront the facts," he said.

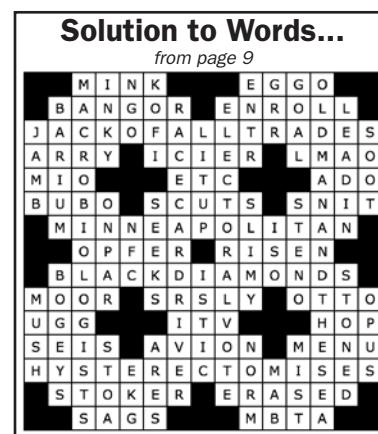


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# KITTYS ALL DA WAY DOWN





# Single-Sex Swimming Pilot Will Continue Until June

**Swimming**, from Page 1

staffing the pool two extra hours a week.

Although the pilot program will end during the week of commencement, the athletics department hopes to make the single-gender swimming hours permanent if there is strong interest, said Moore.

According to Murtaza Nek '09, only three men have taken advantage of the swimming hour each week.

Khan says the program is more popular among women; nine showed up the first week, and 13 showed up during the second. Nek attributes the disparity to greater publicity among women. Khan said she advertised the single-gender sessions to members of the Muslim Students's Association, students associated with Hillel, and residents of all-female undergraduate dormitory McCormick Hall.

Nek also suggested that the dif-

ference in interest may be because women might feel more uncomfortable among men in the pool than vice versa.

"Guys are more likely to ogle at women," Nek said.

The inconsistency in participation appears to coincide with the interest Randolph and Moore noticed prior to the program's implementation. Both noted that women had requested the single-gender swim sessions more often than men.

Moore and Director of Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation Julie Soriero said they would prefer to keep both of the single-gender sessions. "You have to offer opportunities to both [genders]," Moore said.

If the men-only hour were to be eliminated, Nek said he would return to using the pool during regular hours, as he did before. Khan was less open to the idea of returning to the pool during regular hours, citing the cumbrousness of wearing a sufficiently modest swimsuit.

MIT's decision to begin holding single-gender swim hours comes on the heels of a decision by Harvard University to begin making one of its gyms open for women only during six specific hours each week. That move sparked local and national controversy, as some believed the move was sexist and caters to religious interests — specifically, Muslim interests.

Moore says single-gender swim

program at MIT has nothing to do with sexism or religion. "We try to meet demands wherever they are," he said.

Moore also pointed out that the Harvard program substantially differs from MIT's, as Harvard offers female-only hours but not male-only swimming hours. He also noted that the single-gender times occur outside regular operating hours. The Alumni Pool closes at 9 p.m. on weekdays, so there is a thirty minute gap before the single-gender swim sessions.

Randolph said he supports keeping the swim option open. "We have a big and diverse community and I think it's important to allow that diversity to express itself," he said.

## News Briefs, continued

**Briefs**, from Page 1

2006 at the intersection of Amesbury Street and Memorial Dr. while crossing outside of the crosswalk. Joseph A. Croswell '99 sustained serious injuries after a motorcycle accident on Mass Ave. in 1996, when he was hit by a car making a left turn onto Amherst Street.

Meyers, a native of New York City and a graduate of Yale University, was pursuing a master's in the classics. He was an active member of Harvard Hillel and fondly recalled by many of his colleagues. "Isaac was a cherished member of our community, and we feel immeasurable pain and sorrow at this time," Harvard Hillel wrote on its Web site. Ben Shapiro wrote in his column on *townhall.com*: "Isaac was simply a phenomenal person. He was ridiculously literate -- his love for literature and philosophy was infectious." Family and friends met for an informal gathering at Harvard's Boylston Hall on Monday night. The funeral was held Wednesday in New York City.

—S. Campbell Proehl

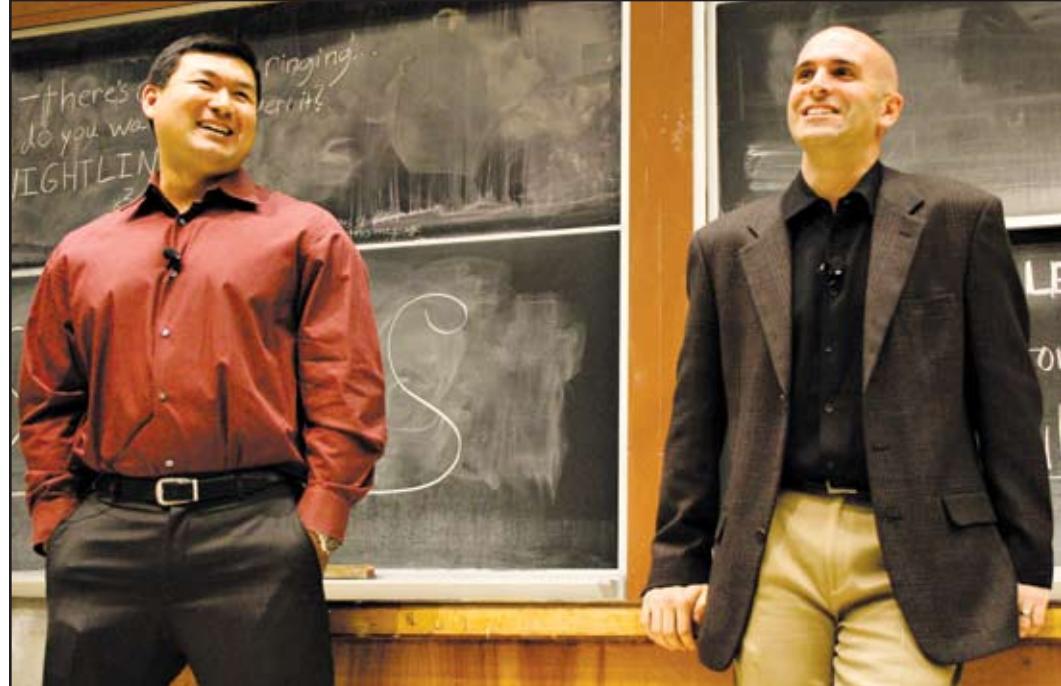
## Faculty Vote On Proposals

At the Wednesday, March 19 faculty meeting, the faculty voted to make the sophomore exploratory option permanent. The option had been a five-year experiment of the Committee on the Undergraduate Program. The CUP reported that students who declared a subject exploratory had a higher sophomore-year grade point average than students who did not declare a subject exploratory.

The faculty also voted to add a Pass/D/Fail option for graduate students. Departments and subject instructors will be able to restrict students' use of the option. The Committee on Graduate Programs will reevaluate the option after five years.

The faculty also heard a proposal to make the Comparative Media Studies course, which had been a five-year experiment, permanent. The faculty will vote on that proposal at the next regularly scheduled meeting, on Wednesday, April 16.

—Michael McGraw-Herdeg



ALICE FAN  
Michael Aponte '95 (left) and Dave Irvine '95, two of the foremost players in MIT's blackjack team, share their experiences at "The True Story of the MIT Blackjack Team" sponsored by LSC last Tuesday, March 18.

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# CUP Proposes New Regulation: Two Majors, One Piece of Paper

**Double Major**, from Page 1

getting two degrees complete an extra 90 units.

Instead of receiving two degrees at commencement, a student studying two courses will receive a single S.B. degree with both courses printed on it. This will have no effect on how minors are awarded. Petitions for triple majors, which were last accepted in March 2000, will still not be accepted.

One justification for the change is leveling the playing field for students who might not come in with Advanced Placement (AP) credits. "There is this equity issue," said Henderson.

Henderson said that the change would make it simpler and easier to understand what pursuing two majors entails: completing the requirements of two department programs, not completing two separate undergraduate degrees.

Henderson said that faculty responded positively to the proposal at Wednesday's meeting.

If faculty approve the policy

change next month, the CUP, COC, and administrative offices will implement the change. The CUP hopes to offer this option to students in graduating in 2010, said Henderson. Current students will not be prevented from receiving double degrees. Holmes said that double degrees could be eliminated for incoming freshmen starting with the class of 2012.

But not all students approve of the new proposal.

Martin F. Holmes '08, the Undergraduate Association's president and a member of the CUP, said that some people see the two degrees as a tradition unique to MIT. Most peer institutions do not hand out two pieces of paper to students who complete two majors.

Others, Holmes said, were concerned that removing the extra 90 unit requirement would make the degree seem less challenging. A related concern raised by student feedback to the CUP is that peer pressure might entice more students to attempt an apparently easier double major.

After various faculty standing committees such as the Committee

on Curricula and Faculty Policy Committee reviewed this proposal and these concerns, the CUP brought the proposal before the faculty.

The proposal originated from the recommendations of the Task Force on the Undergraduate Educational Commons, which recommended flexible cross-disciplinary studies in its fall 2006 final report. The idea has been thrown around since 1999, Henderson said.

Members of the CUP hope that more students will pursue two majors under the new plan, said Henderson.

Will getting one piece of paper instead of two change the world? Maybe not.

But by allowing more people to pursue degrees in more than one area that interests them, Holmes and Henderson said they hope that this transition will promote interdisciplinary collaboration that could one day tackle the world's challenging problems.

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# SPORTS

## MIT Volleyball Takes Down Rival Harvard During Senior Night

By Shreyes Seshasai

SPORTS EDITOR

Senior night ended in triumph for the men's volleyball team, as the Engineers defeated Harvard University for the first time since 1999 in front of an energized Rockwell Cage on Wednesday night. After dropping the first game, MIT

came back to defeat its rivals from down the river, 22-30, 30-26, 30-28, and 30-27.

As part of the annual senior night celebration, the team commemorated the careers of its five seniors before the game, with younger players introducing and giving short speeches about each senior. Combining serious praise with a little humor, the team and fans showed their gratitude towards five of the most influential players in the program's history, setting the stage for what would become yet another memorable night in their volleyball careers.

A short four years ago, Praveen Pamidimukkala '08, Ryan G. Dean '08, Matthew Ng '08, and Stephen D. Ray '08 came to MIT and joined a men's team in flux. This core group, which soon would be joined by Kenneth K. Rosche '08 to round out the current senior class, stayed together and developed MIT into the powerhouse it is today, consistently performing well in the challenging North East Collegiate Volleyball Association New England Division.

Much of this success can also be credited to head coach Paul Dill and his experienced coaching staff. Dill has done well in developing the program, starting with the current seniors, his first recruiting class at MIT. Earlier this month, Dill became the first coach in the program's history to reach 100 career wins.

For the seniors, this game didn't mark the end of their home careers, but it still provided some of the most

special moments of the season.

MIT pulled out to an early 6-3 lead in the first game, but Harvard took control late, 25-19. The visitors held that lead and took the first game 30-22.

In the second game, Malcolm K. Bean '11 set the tone early with a block to take the first point. With Eugene Jang '09 serving, and strong net play from T. Scott Pollom '09 and Dean, MIT built its lead to 13-7.

The advantage didn't last that long though, as Harvard came back before another block by Dean tied the game at 20-20. Later after a long rally, a kill by Pamidimukkala, last week's NECVA Player of the Week, brought the score to 27-24. The Engineers took the second game 30-24.

MIT held its momentum in the third game with more strong play at net. Three straight blocks brought their lead to 8-2, and artful serving by Jang kept MIT ahead 14-7.

A Harvard timeout seemed to end MIT's momentum, but a drop shot by Bean followed by an ace by Pamidimukkala brought MIT's lead back up to 21-15. Seniors Dean, described by teammates as the heart and soul of the team, and Ng, whose defense continues to impress audiences, both were steady factors for the team.

With the game becoming tight, the Engineers brought in co-captain Ray to serve, as they have done in many pressure situations throughout the year. Ray responded beautifully, surprising Harvard with an ace. The strong serving of Harvard's Brady Weissbord though brought the score close again, but another kill from Pamidimukkala ended it 30-28.

In the fourth game, a kill from Garrett L. Winther '11 tied it at 22, and with Pollom serving, Tech went on a run. With the crowd on their feet, Michael Demyttenaere '10 unleashed a spike that Harvard couldn't handle, and MIT won the game 30-27, securing their fourth win in a row.



Ken Van Tilburg '11 hits a running forehand during a doubles match against Emerson College in the J.B. Carr Tennis Bubble on March 19. Van Tilburg and partner Eric A. Beren '08, this week's NEWMAC Doubles Team of the Week, won the match 8-2. The Engineers won the match decisively 7-0.

### SCOREBOARD

#### Baseball

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

Rhode Island College (7-3) 3  
MIT (0-1) 1

#### Softball

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

Simmons College (9-2) 10  
MIT (0-1) 11

## Brophy, Jacobi Swim at Nationals As Holbrook Captures Third Place

By James Kramer

DAPER STAFF

The Engineers put the finishing touches on their third consecutive top 20 finish at the NCAA Women's

 Swimming and Diving Championships on Saturday, while senior Doria M. Holbrook '08 closed her career as the top diver in Institute history. Holbrook won her eighth All-America honor in as many tries.

Holbrook finished fourth overall on the three-meter with a score of 490.40. Despite easily topping her championship score of last year, Holbrook slipped from first to fourth after the preliminaries as the first three finishers shattered the existing national record. Holbrook also

finished third in the one-meter competition, scoring 428.65 to hold off Calvin College's Erica Duer, who made a late push for the bronze.

Sasha B. Brophy '08 delivered an electrifying performance in the 200-yard freestyle, shaving nearly three seconds off her personal best to finish sixth in Friday's preliminaries with an Institute-record and NEWMAC Open-record time of 1:52.64. Brophy finished eighth in the finals with a time of 1:53.86.

Amy E. Jacobi '11 also enjoyed a good first trip to nationals, finishing seventh in the consolation finals on Friday in the 100-yard fly. Jacobi split 57.67 seconds in the morning and 57.71 seconds at the evening session.

Brophy swam 5:06.65 to finish 24th in the 500-yard freestyle and

Jacobi split 24.47 seconds to close in 21st in the 50-yard freestyle during Thursday's preliminaries.

MIT participated in only two events on the final day of the meet, with Brophy and Jacobi returning from strong efforts earlier in the weekend to compete in the 100-yard freestyle. In the final race of her collegiate career, Brophy delivered another solid effort by placing 25th in the prelims with a time of 53.13 seconds. Jacobi finished 36th during the morning session in a clip of 54.05 seconds.

MIT finished 19th out of 52 scoring teams to earn its highest finish at the NCAA Championships since securing 16th place during the 1988-89 campaign. Kenyon College cruised to its 22nd national title in the past 25 years.

## Harrison Leads Women's Gymnastics To Highest Team Score in Four Years

By Eduardo Ovalle

ASSISTANT COACH

The women's gymnastics team posted its highest team score in four years and the third-best total in the

 program's history with a total of 185.025 points to place fifth at the Eastern College Athletic Conference championships hosted

by Springfield College on Saturday. Ursinus College was the crowned the champion with an overall mark of 187.675, followed by State University of New York at Brockport (187.175), State University of New York at Cortland (186.75), and the host Pride (185.875).

Individually, the Engineers took home more awards than any other school as Sophia L. Harrison '08 was named the Co-Gymnast of the Year. The honor marked the third year in a row MIT was part of conference gymnast of the year accolades. In 2006, Julia C. Zimmerman '09 was voted the Rookie of the Year and then followed this up with Gymnast of the Year plaudits last season.

In addition to her conference award, Harrison captured the all-around crown with a personal best of 38.275 and successfully defended her uneven bar title with a 9.625. Zimmerman put up a new Institute record on vault (9.75) which also claimed top honors in the event.

The Cardinal and Gray got started on the beam with its highest total of the season (46.55) and its second-highest mark in Institute history. Katie M. Mingo '10 (9.15), Sarah N. Trowbridge '08 (9.425), Harrison (9.50), and Zimmerman (9.55), the defending national champion in the event, all contributed solid routines.

On floor, Harrison took third place with a 9.675 as Zimmerman finished fifth with a mark of 9.65. Trowbridge contributed a solid 9.375 while Elizabeth L. Stavely '11 notched a season-best performance of 9.25.

MIT showcased its dominance on the vault with a 47.225 event total that ranked second in the competition.

tion and crushed the previous Institute record of 46.675, set in 2004 and matched earlier this year. Zimmerman topped the MIT record with a 9.75 to claim first place. Alison M. Barnard '09 registered a personal-best score of 9.575 to finish seventh overall. Rebecca L. Stavely '11 also set a new personal standard (9.30) as Harrison (9.475) and Trowbridge (9.175) rounded out the squad.

After three rotations, MIT was in third place heading into the uneven bars. With an automatic team bid to the National Collegiate Gymnastics Association Championship on the line, the Engineers' quest fell short

as they were unable to maintain their ranking. Harrison led the way with her title-winning total of 9.625 as Trowbridge (8.925) and Barnard (8.825) bolstered the team's efforts.

Due to their strong individual performances, MIT will send five gymnasts to the NCGA Championship which will be hosted by State University of New York in Cortland on March 28-29. Trowbridge, on the strength of a career-best total of 36.85, qualified for the all-around along with Harrison and Zimmerman. Barnard will compete on the vault while Mingo will represent the Engineers on the balance beam.

### Women's Water Polo Defeats Boston College

By Analiese DiConti

TEAM MEMBER

The women's water polo team took sole control of first place in the North Atlantic Division on March 13 with a 10-8 win over Boston College at the Zesiger Center Pool. Blair K. Brettman G and Analiese M. DiConti '10 had three goals each to give the Engineers an early lead. The team held off Boston College's late attempts in the final minutes of the game.

After two quarters in goal, Caroline A. DeBoer '11 came out of the cage to tally three more goals for the Engineers. Newcomer Amanda C. Engler-Dobberke G made three saves in goal to hold the Eagles down in the final half of the match. Lisa C. Tacoronte '10 proved a valuable asset with four assists, and Kristen L. Cook G contributed unstoppable defense and a goal.

### The Tech's Athlete of the Week: Sophia L. Harrison '08

Sophia L. Harrison '08 was named the Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference Co-Gymnast of the Year on Saturday as MIT placed fifth at the ECAC Championships. In addition, Harrison captured the all-around crown in the competition with a personal best of 38.275. She placed first in uneven bars with a 9.625, and took third on floor with a 9.675.

Harrison will join four other MIT gymnasts at the National Collegiate Gymnastics Association Championship, which will be hosted by SUNY Cortland on March 28-29. Sarah N. Trowbridge '08 set a new career best in qualifying for the all-around competition, along with teammates Zimmerman and Harrison.

The honor marked the second straight year MIT has won this conference honor, as Zimmerman was awarded it last year.

—Shreyes Seshasai, Sports Editor

### UPCOMING HOME EVENTS

Friday, March 21, 2008

Baseball vs. Vassar College  
Men's Tennis vs. Skidmore College

2, 4:30 p.m., Briggs Field  
4 p.m., duPont Tennis Courts

Saturday, March 22, 2008

Baseball vs. Babson College  
Sailing, Boston Dinghy Cup  
Men's Gymnastics, New England Invitational

12, 2:30 p.m., Briggs Field  
9:30 a.m., Charles River  
3:00 p.m., duPont Athletic Center